

**EUGENE WATER & ELECTRIC BOARD
UPRIVER SESSION**

**MCKENZIE FIRE & RESCUE TRAINING CENTER
42870 MCKENZIE HIGHWAY**

**April 23, 2019
6:30 P.M.**

Commissioners may pose questions to staff prior to the scheduled board meeting. To view Commissioners' pre-meeting questions and staff responses, visit <http://www.eweb.org/about-us/board-of-commissioners/2019-board-agendas-and-minutes>.

Commissioners Present: Sonya Carlson, President; Steve Mital, Vice President; Dick Helgeson, Mindy Schlossberg, Commissioners

Commissioners Absent: John Brown

Others Present: Frank Lawson, General Manager; Patty Boyle, Principal Project Manager; Jen Connors, Communications Specialist; Randy Dersham, McKenzie River Discovery Center; Rene Gonzalez, Customer Solutions Manager; Tom Hoyt, McKenzie River Discovery Center; Mike McCann, Generation Manager; Lisa McLaughlin, Environmental Supervisor; Rod Price, Chief Electric Engineering & Operations Officer; Mark Zinniker, Generation Engineering Supervisor; Juan Serpa-Munoz, Business Line Manager

Welcome and Meeting Overview

President Carlson called the Upriver Session to order at 6:32 p.m. She welcomed everyone in attendance and thanked them for being there. President Carlson recognized Debi Wilson, General Manager of Lane Electric; she thanked Ms. Wilson for attending. President Carlson also recognized Lane County Commissioner Heather Buch; she thanked Commissioner Buch for attending.

Leaburg Canal Update

Mr. McCann and Mr. Zinniker offered those present an update and PowerPoint presentation on the Leaburg Canal.

Some salient points of the presentation were:

- Installed new standby generator at the Leaburg dam
- Installed cameras at the Leaburg dam facility
- Leaburg canal is in outage since October, 2018, due to canal seepage
- Along the Leaburg and Walterville canals, there are 24 seepage weirs for monitoring seepage
- In September, 2018, one of the seepage weir locations exhibited with a small void opening on the canal floor behind the weir; this was the triggering event for lowering Leaburg canal levels

- Leaburg canal will still be nonfunctioning during the dry season of 2019

Carmen Smith Project Update

Mr. McCann and Mr. Zinniker offered those present an update and PowerPoint presentation on the Carmen-Smith project.

Some salient points of the presentation were:

- Work is wrapping up on improvements to the Icecap Campground, and will be accessible to the public by Memorial Day, 2019
- Decades-old equipment at the Carmen-Smith power plant is being replaced, including turbine shutoff valves
- As of April 2019, Carmen-Smith went into its 2019 outage and is no longer generating power while we focus on replacing the substation in 2019.
- All of the old substation equipment is being removed, and will be replaced with more current equipment
- Recently, the oil had been removed from the old transformers so they can be removed from the deck
- The new transformers will incorporate a newer, environmentally safer oil
- Carmen-Smith will return to operation by late November-early December, 2019
- Seepage from sinkholes below the Carmen Diversion reservoir is entering a deep aquifer
- Carmen Diversion reservoir will not be open for recreational use summer of 2019

Storm Response

Mr. Price offered those present an update and PowerPoint presentation on the February 2019 snowstorm response.

Some salient points of the presentation were:

- There were approximately 20,000 outages during the snowstorm, approximately 2,000 outages were in the upriver community
- At work for EWEB during storm response were: 15 line crews, 10 tree crews, and 300 EWEB staff
- Total storm restoration cost was approximately \$4.3 million
- EWEB is prepared to apply to FEMA for reimbursement to recover a portion (approximately 75%) of that cost
- EWEB was able to restore power to the majority of ratepayers within nine days

An audience member asked why, during the storm and its restoration efforts, the power to their residence would come on, go back off, and come back on several times.

Mr. Price responded that at substations, and along lines, there existed reclosers, which acted as a light switch. When there is a fault at a substation, or along a line, the recloser senses that, and shuts off power until the fault is rectified, at which time the recloser will turn the power back on.

EWEB Products & Services / Emergency Preparedness

Ms. Connors, Mr. Gonzalez, and Mr. Serpa-Munoz offered those present an update and PowerPoint presentation on EWEB Products & Services and Emergency Preparedness.

Some salient points of the presentation were:

- Mr. Serpa-Munoz announced the launching of the Backup Generator Loan Program, which would help ratepayers purchase and install a generator on their property
- The Backup Generator Loan Program would offer two loan options: for ratepayers with a domestic well, the Program would offer a loan of up to \$4,000, and for customers without a domestic well, the Program would offer a loan of up to \$2,000
- The Backup Generator Loan Program was scheduled to go live on April 24, 2019
- EWEB offers standard and income-based rebates, and zero-interest loans, for the weatherization of a ratepayer's home—both single-occupancy, and multi-occupant dwellings
- EWEB offers free weatherization audits to help ratepayers weatherize their homes/apartments
- EWEB's Pledge to Prepare campaign kicked off in January of 2019, and is designed to help EWEB ratepayers and their families prepare for a natural disaster or an emergency by offering a monthly emergency preparedness calendar and checklist
- When reporting outages, EWEB ratepayers should ensure their cellphone number is tied to their EWEB account.

McKenzie River Discovery Center

Mr. Hoyt and Mr. Dersham offered those present a PowerPoint presentation outlining the new McKenzie River Discovery Center, which would be built on the banks of Leaburg Lake.

General Question and Answer Session

An audience member asked how backlogged EWEB was in the completion of after-storm jobs which were still not finished, including downed cables.

Mr. Price asked the audience member for their name and address, and he assured them he would look into it.

An audience member pointed out a lack of updates on EWEB's part during the snowstorm response; they said they called several times, and checked the outage map several times during cleanup efforts, and there were never any updates to be found. They wondered what exactly EWEB was doing to provide updates.

Mr. Price said the outage map was being updated, and it was difficult to give ratepayers a precise date and time as to when EWEB crews would be on site to clean up/restore power.

An audience member expressed concern that during the outage, they had no access to the technology EWEB suggested its ratepayers use to check on updates.

President Carlson offered that EWEB had recently changed their phone system to get rid of the phone backlog; she said changes were made before and during the 2019 snowstorm which resulted in a significant reduction in phone calls because other ratepayers, who were able, were checking constantly on the outage map.

Mr. Lawson added that, in the beginning of a storm cleanup, it was impossible to give detailed information concerning line crews and where they are and where they are going next. He said that as the restoration/cleanup efforts moved forward, it was easier to give more and more detailed, precise information.

An audience member suggested EWEB think more primitively about disaster preparedness. They said that during the snowstorm, they had no access to any news of any kind from the outside world, not even a newspaper.

The audience member said they had a three-pronged concern about the way in which EWEB handled tree trimming around its power cables; they were concerned with: safety, cost, and the aesthetics of McKenzie Highway. Finally, they said undergrounding utility cables would alleviate all the issues they had with tree trimming.

An audience member said it was their understanding that Lane Electric had undergrounded some of its utility infrastructure, and they did not understand why EWEB could not underground also.

Commissioner Helgeson offered that an approximate historical cost of undergrounding utility infrastructure was \$2 million per mile. He said that high cost would undoubtedly have an impact on the utility bills of EWEB ratepayers.

An audience member asked how much EWEB spent per year to maintain its wires.

Mr. Price said, on an annual basis, it was approximately \$11,000 in electrical costs, and approximately \$12,000 per mile for tree trimming.

An audience member offered that, in 2000, they had undergrounded a wire on their property, and it cost around \$2,000 to do so.

Mr. Price said EWEB was in the process of undergrounding the ground wire and removing pole crossarms, and reconfiguring transformers, resulting in only one wire aboveground. He added this would reduce the chances of limbs/trees causing power outages by more than 60%.

An audience member expressed concern about crews from various companies coming through and trimming off tree branches, but leaving the cut branches behind. They wondered if anyone would be coming along to collect them.

Ms. Nuttall said that there were contractors in the area working for Charter/Spectrum, which were responsible for the downed branches. She offered that EWEB had reached out to Charter about this issue after being notified of it by its upriver ratepayers.

An audience member congratulated EWEB on its restoration efforts, but insisted the mass outages could have been prevented by proper tree maintenance, as in cutting down alder and maple trees, instead of the current practice of perpetual trimming. They said EWEB would be well served working with local radio stations to get up to date information out to its upriver ratepayers that may otherwise have little to no technological access during a weather emergency.

The audience member posited that, in order to keep the McKenzie River safe, ODOT should be tapped to un-designate McKenzie Highway as a National Network Highway, to prevent the further transport of dangerous chemicals, oil, and gas along it.

An audience member asserted to those present, that there was a finite number of first responders, as there was a finite number of emergency resources in the upriver community, and that the residents of same should rely on themselves and their neighbors in times of emergency.

An audience member and organic farmer who uses the Leaburg canal for irrigation, expressed concern over the low level of water within the canal. They said there was not even enough water in the bottom of the canal to facilitate pumping. They were also concerned about the low canal levels, as they were dangerous to the fish which move through it.

Mr. Lawson said that EWEB was not free to do any kind of work on the canal without the go-ahead from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Mr. Zinniker said that EWEB was working with FERC to get an approval to bring canal levels back to what they were in late October, 2018.

Conclusion

President Carlson thanked all those who attended. She adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.

Assistant Secretary

President